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File *jh 3072*  
From: JOHN HOLMES  
Date: 29 July 1996

PRIME MINISTER

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OK

CALL TO THE TAOISEACH

You agreed at the end of last week to speak briefly to the Taoiseach on the phone, before your respective summer holidays, in order to draw a line ... under the Drumcree exchanges. I attach a copy of your latest message to him.

I had hoped this might be possible today, but the Taoiseach was in the rural fastnesses of Ireland all day. Could you therefore bear to speak to him from home tomorrow evening, after your return from Manchester? That would at least give you a useful introduction - the appalling destruction caused by the IRA.

The Belfast talks are expected to wind up today for the summer, but it may be late tonight before the exact outcome is clear. The rules of procedure have been agreed, and a Business Committee is likely to be nominated. But agreement on the rest of the agenda is bedevilled by decommissioning, as you know. There is just a chance of an interim agreement, based on setting dates for the report of a decommissioning sub-committee and the launch of the main talks, which would enable the talks to finish on a reasonably bright note. But I wouldn't hold your breath. Both sides are in awkward mood.

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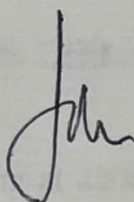
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Meanwhile George Mitchell had to fly back to the US today because of the sudden death of his brother (I have no details). This is another reason for . . . bringing the talks to an end today - Holkeri is not the same. I attach a draft letter of condolence to George, as well as thanks for his efforts so far.

If you agree, I will fax an up-to-date speaking note to the Finings tomorrow afternoon, covering the latest on the Apprentice Boys, as well as the talks.

Content to try to speak to the Taoiseach around 6.30-7.00pm?



**JOHN HOLMES**

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